



INTRODUCTION

Overview

Historic preservation, conservation of older neighborhoods, and promotion of quality urban design in Leesburg protect the town's unique identity while building a good community. Historic preservation includes protection of architecturally and historically significant buildings and their settings, archeological sites, and other significant places in the town. The preservation of Leesburg's historic character - as represented in its 18th, 19th and early 20th century grid layout, architecture, and public settings - is vitally important to the community. The goal of preservation in Leesburg is both to protect its designated historic district and to continue to identify districts, landmarks, and other significant places outside the Old and Historic District that deserve protection, so that the definition of our cultural history becomes a continuous activity.

Purpose of the Element: Maintain Character of the Town

Greater awareness of the varied physical environments which contribute to the character of Leesburg's neighborhoods throughout the town is recommended. Preservation of only those resources that are historically and architecturally significant excludes many of Leesburg's older neighborhoods which also make an important contribution to the identity of the town. To protect the unique attributes of these older developments, this plan proposes the creation of conservation districts. Such districts would serve the interests of neighborhood conservation by ensuring that regulations and standards devised in the context of conventional late 20th century residential development do not erode the established character of existing older neighborhoods.

In future development, particularly planned developments involving mixed use, the town encourages design that produces neighborhoods with a sense of place, much in the same manner that older established neighborhoods have promoted community identity.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION

Purpose

A major goal of preservation in Leesburg is the acknowledgment and protection of existing as well as future districts, landmarks and archeological sites that represent Leesburg's past. An element of the preservation effort in Leesburg is the 1975 building survey and analysis conducted in the Old and Historic District which identified and assigned a value rating to each resource. That survey, which only addressed buildings, needs to be updated. Periodic updating of the survey with current information on new historical research and the condition and integrity of buildings would avoid decision-making based upon antiquated information. In addition, an on-going project of identifying, documenting and designating eligible properties outside the Old and Historic District for preservation would be consistent with the goals of Leesburg to distinguish local archeological, historic and architectural landmarks.

Preservation survey projects should include an update of the survey of the Old and Historic District as well as identification of areas of new districts and landmarks, addressing reasons that make the district or site unique such as archeological, historical and architectural significance, including urban design as well as natural and designed landscapes as elements which should be protected.

Of equal importance to documenting the historic area is a study to identify other neighborhoods that also define Leesburg and should be maintained. The investigation would address neighborhoods located outside of the Old and Historic District. While these areas are not as old as the Nicholas Minor section of town, the neighborhoods are an asset to Leesburg's identity. Surveys should identify those factors that make the area a unique and desirable neighborhood of Leesburg. The items to be studied should include scale and contribution of the buildings (based on architectural significance or simple siting and massing), public improvements (street width, sidewalks or lack of same, drainage improvements, etc.), voids in the development patterns (areas that should remain open or be used for infill), vegetation (both existing contributory and desirable new planting), as well as details of the fabric that contribute to uniqueness (a stone wall, a brick walk, a tree interrupting a sidewalk, and irregularities in street width or lack of conformity to present-day development standards).

Present Historic District

The site of 18th century Leesburg, located within the boundaries of the Old and Historic District, was part of a much larger tract of land that Thomas, Sixth Lord Fairfax, sold to Francis Awbrey in 1730. Upon Awbrey's death around 1741, a portion of his land passed on to one of his sons, John Awbrey. Following John Awbrey's death, his widow conveyed the land that included the "Leesburg" site to John Carlyle of Alexandria, Virginia, who subsequently transferred the land to Nicholas Minor in 1757 (*The Historian's Guide to Loudoun County, Virginia*).

Approximately a year after the formation of Loudoun County on June 8, 1757, the Virginia Assembly designated a site on Minor's land for the County Court House. Following the selection of his site, Minor hired John Hough to survey 60 acres, producing a plan of seventy half-acre lots along with six streets: Cornwall, King, Loudoun, Royal, Back (Wirt) and Church streets. Minor called his small development George Town after the English monarch, George II. In October 1758, The General Assembly established the Town of Leesburg, which comprises the present Town's oldest section; it contains many fine examples of buildings from the earliest period of the Town's development. The downtown core area, in fact, forms a distinct neighborhood, as do other sections of the historic area such as the Georgetown neighborhood on South King Street, whose development dates from the third and fourth quarter of the 19th century and early 20th century; the North King Street neighborhood above North Street, which was constructed from the mid-19th to the mid-20th century; the West Market Street neighborhood, where the architecturally significant residences of the area date from the mid-19th to the early 20th century; and Edwards Ferry Road, whose development spans the entire period of the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries.

Presently, the Historic District is defined by a mix of land uses, predominately residential, retail, and office. The County Court complex, the Leesburg Government Center and the County Complex are also located within the district. New development has generally been consistent with the density, scale and orthogonal (grid) layout of 18th and 19th century development patterns. In 1990, the Old and Historic District was reclassified to either a B-1 commercial zoning district designation or an R-HD residential zoning district designation in order to align the regulations with historical development patterns. It should be clarified, however, that residential properties placed in the Old and Historic District during later expansion of the district were not rezoned to the RH-D classification but retained their original residential zoning classifications.

In 1963 when the Old and Historic District was created, the boundary of the new district followed

the incorporated Town boundaries indicated on Gray's New Map of Leesburg of 1878. Although Gray's boundaries included the original Nicholas Minor section of Leesburg, the adoption of the 19th century map meant the exclusion of several locally important historic and architecturally significant properties dating from the 19th and 20th centuries. The omission was rectified when preservation consultants, hired to survey and analyze the District in 1975, recommended that the boundaries of the Historic District be expanded. The areas identified for inclusion were the West Market Street neighborhood, the Georgetown section of South King Street and Dodona Manor. When the recommendation was implemented in 1989, the expansion proposal to designate the West Market Street area meant the inclusion of a triangular piece of land that contained the 20th century development Westgreen. The inclusion of the Westgreen site was consistent with the earlier 1975 recommendation for expansion of the historic district. Although the parcel was not developed at the time of the recommendation, its inclusion in the 1975 recommendation signified the importance of the triangular area to the neighborhood. The sensitive manner in which the subdivision was subsequently laid out and the traditional building designs that were constructed warranted the inclusion of the area which prominently borders West Market Street and which strategically links the West Market street neighborhood with the Rock Spring estate, an adjacent historic landmark. By 1990, the Old and Historic District contained most of the area that was recommended in 1975 for inclusion, except for the southern portion of South King Street and Dodona Manor. Dodona Manor was place in the Old and Historic District in April 1995.

The present boundaries of the Old and Historic District are shown on Map 7-1.

Other Historic Sites

Map 7-2 shows the location of individual historic sites in town (both inside and outside the Old and Historic District) as well as in the immediate vicinity of Leesburg that have been surveyed by the Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission (now the Department of Historic Resources). Sites in Leesburg include Dodona Manor (George Marshall home), Waverly, Carradoc Hall, the stone Harper House (threatened), Greenway, Greenwood Farm (in Ida Lee Park), Carlheim (Paxton Home), Fort Beauregard site, and Fort Evans site. Identified historic sites in the Urban Growth Area are Rokeby, Goose Creek Truss Bridge, Dunrobin, Eagle Mining Company, Cattail Ordinary, Greenfield Farm, Bridges Farm, Frances V. Specks Red Rocks Park, Union Baptist Church, Green Hill Farm, Robert Elgin Jr. House, and the Log Tenant House.

Several historic sites in Leesburg and in the Urban Growth Area which were previously identified and documented by the Department of Historic Resources have been destroyed or demolished. One of the sites listed above is protected from demolition.

Alternatives to Historic District Designations

Leesburg has a number of older neighborhoods with a distinct sense of place which should be considered as potential conservation districts. These include the area along Edwards Ferry Road bordering the Old and Historic District; the adjoining Lowenbach subdivision; the area along South King Street bordering the Old and Historic District; the Waverly Heights subdivision; and the Fairview subdivision. Other older neighborhoods might also be considered.

The purpose of establishing conservation districts would be to retain certain identifiable attributes of these neighborhoods which might be lost through alterations due to inappropriate or incompatible public

improvements. To establish a conservation district, a neighborhood would be identified based on the cohesive architectural, urban design and natural character of the area. The plan for establishing a conservation district may be tailored to a neighborhood depending upon the elements that characterize the area, which may include but need not be limited to building orientation, setback, height, massing, and public setting such as the street width, sidewalk width and vegetation.

Other tools, such as zoning, can also be used for preservation. In particular, the state enabling legislation that allows "Special Government Interest Overlay Districts" could be considered for limited areas that would benefit the town in some specific, definable manner, such as tourism enhancement or economic vitality.

PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION TOOLS

The Old and Historic District

The Historic District is protected under Article 5A of the Leesburg Zoning Ordinance. The district, originally created in 1963, is an "overlay zone" providing architectural and demolition controls over an area zoned for a variety of residential, mixed commercial-office-residential, and industrial uses. The preservation ordinance established the Board of Architectural Review, whose stated purpose is "to maintain the distinctive character of the district and the architectural integrity of the particularly notable structures within it and to prevent intrusions in the district that would be incompatible with this established character." In 1994, the Board adopted detailed design guidelines for proposed new construction and rehabilitation of structures in the district with the purpose of reinforcing the character of historic properties and the surrounding historic setting.

A fundamental component of preservation in Leesburg's Historic District is the 1975 Hartzog, Lader and Richards building survey. The building survey is used by the Board of Architectural Review to consider projects, so it is important that the building survey information and corresponding evaluation be current for good decision making. In conjunction with updating the building survey, archaeological investigations of properties in the Historic District should be pursued. Identification and documentation of significant buildings and archaeological sites outside of the Old and Historic District should be an on-going process. It is important that information for sites that have been surveyed be updated and new undocumented sites be recorded as this information is vital to good planning practices that coordinate development and the preservation of historic resources.

Historic Sites Outside of the Old and Historic District

Outside of the Old and Historic District, individual historic sites (with the exception of Greenway estate) are not protected by the present regulations, and as a result, many of the town's historic resources have been lost. Since the Zoning Ordinance authorizes the Board of Architectural Review to establish and maintain a list of structures, sites and areas having a special historical, architectural or aesthetic interest or value, a landmark listing should be established for historic sites located outside of the historic district affording the same protection and preservation that is given to properties in the Old and Historic District.

Conservation Districts

The established character of Leesburg extends beyond the Old and Historic District and while it is important to preserve the 18th, 19th and early 20th century area, other neighborhoods although not historic contribute to the identity of Leesburg.

Map 7-3 indicates the areas outside the Historic District determined to be important for conservation. These areas share a differing but unique urban design character that is deemed important enough for conservation at this time.

Being identified as an area for "conservation" differs from identification as an "historic district." A conservation district indicates that the fabric of development is important, not necessarily the buildings themselves. While the buildings may become more important with the passage of time, few would qualify under present historic definitions.

Being designated a conservation district should have a positive impact on a neighborhood. Conservation does not mean that development is inappropriate; infill, redevelopment, and growth of the area may be needed to complete the neighborhood. Further, being located in a conservation neighborhood would not entail additional regulations on property owners but would distinguish the neighborhood for the public sector as an area in which flexibility would be granted in applying zoning, subdivision and engineering standards. Development in a conservation neighborhood would entail evaluating potential negative impacts and then avoiding inappropriate changes to the area's character, which in most cases is defined by earlier engineering standards. Those earlier standards reflected a pedestrian identity and scale, rather than vehicular transportation needs, and thereby created a more human setting.

"Improvements" to reflect present-day engineering standards are as inappropriate in these areas as they are in historic districts. Modification of the infrastructure could well change the unique character of the area to resemble that of contemporary suburban development. The loss of character and identity affect both the neighborhood and the community. However, care must be taken to assure that standards which uphold the public health and safety are maintained. For example, pedestrian access should be provided for even if the original development did not contain this feature. Street lighting should not be eliminated, but should be designed to facilitate both public safety and the neighborhood character.

URBAN DESIGN

Purpose

Urban design is concerned with the quality of a community's physical environment: planning the way in which its buildings, streets, public utilities, open spaces and natural features can be arranged in a rational and pleasing order. Where there are opportunities for development in or adjacent to a historic district or landmark, the site plan of new development should be integrated with the established development pattern of Leesburg's historic area(s). New structures and public improvements should be compatible with the established scale and character of the older neighborhoods that define the Town of Leesburg. Inspiration for future development should take its cue from Leesburg's neighborhoods where building tradition has created areas reflecting a distinct character. The tremendous amount of vacant land that still exists in the town (primarily in the area annexed in 1984) provides Leesburg with the opportunity

to promote good urban design at a much larger scale than the town has previously experienced. To encourage quality urban design, it is recommended that flexible regulations be created to encourage development to maintain variety and scale consistent with existing neighborhoods. The town should continue to search for and support innovative planning practices that encourage future development to be consistent with the existing context of Leesburg.

Urban Design Trends

Over the past several decades of rapid urban development, Leesburg has not escaped many of its less fortunate results:

Streets scaled to the automobile with little regard for the pedestrian or human scale.

- Streets designed to meet state-imposed standards inconsistent with Leesburg's scale adjacent to historic neighborhoods.
- Regulations that require development patterns inconsistent with the existing character of the town.
- Lack of consistency in architectural design between new projects and the established building tradition of Leesburg.
- Insensitive architectural design.
- An abundance of freestanding commercial signs and public road signs along transportation corridors.
- Visual complexity created by overhead utility wires, particularly in the Old and Historic District.

In an effort to counter some of these trends, in January 1990 the town established the H-2 Corridor Overlay District and accompanying design guidelines to encourage better design and enhance the visual experience along Leesburg's major roadways leading into the Old and Historic District. The H-2 Corridor extends between 300 and 1,000 feet (depending on location) on both sides of East and West Market Street (Route 7) and 500 feet on both sides of North and South King Street (Route 15). The approximate location of the H-2 District is shown in Map 7.3. The intent of the H-2 design guidelines is to promote architecture and site development in these corridors that embody the design quality of the Old and Historic District in terms of pedestrian environment, building height, construction materials, and sense of scale.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goals

- To preserve and maintain the distinct identity and character of Leesburg.
- To identify and preserve the established scale and setting of the community.
- To preserve natural and historic features that contribute to the town's sense of place.

Objectives

- Identify and document historic and archeological resources and conservation areas throughout Leesburg.
- Encourage new development patterns to reflect rather than compete with desirable natural and built aspects of surrounding areas.
- Preserve natural topography and features to the greatest extent possible, particularly prominent elements such as ridge lines, rock outcrops, stream valleys, and mature tree cover.
- Protect natural drainage ways as important elements of the natural drainage system and open space network.
- Approach urban design in a comprehensive manner that integrates urban design concerns with planning and zoning regulatory considerations.
- Restore, rehabilitate, conserve and adaptively reuse through regulations.

IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

Policies

Conservation and Historic Preservation Policies

One of Leesburg's primary goals is the protection of the Old and Historic District, and other unique areas representing desirable historic sectors of the town, not only as community resources but also for their contribution to the town's unique character. For similar reasons, the town also seeks to preserve individual historic sites outside of the established District throughout the town. To this end, the following policies are recommended:

1. The character of the historic downtown area will be preserved while allowing it to remain as a viable residential, government, administrative, banking, office, service and specialty shopping area. Residential uses in the Old and Historic District will be continued in order to protect the mixed use character of the area.
2. The town will support the efforts of private individuals, businesses and groups in preserving and maintaining historic sites and structures.
3. The town's regulations will strive to maintain the character of historic districts and sites and conservation districts.

Historic Preservation and Urban Design Element

4. Adaptive reuse of historic structures will be encouraged; any improvement or addition to historic structures or new construction on historic properties should reinforce the historic character of the property.
5. Commercial or employment use of historic properties will not create adverse impacts on any adjoining residential areas including traffic generation, noise and glare. Parking, lighting, signs and other required improvements should be designed to protect the historic character of the property to the greatest extent possible.
6. The entrances to the Old and Historic District will be clearly defined by signs indicating the borders of the District.
7. Whenever possible, an effort will be made to identify historic landmarks for visitors to Leesburg, through the support of the Historic Plaque Program.
8. The town will continue to provide technical preservation assistance to residents and property owners.
9. Landmarks, districts, and sites of historic, architectural or archaeological significance shall be identified and protected. Preservation and rehabilitation of such landmarks, districts and sites by the private sector shall be encouraged by the Town through the creation of incentive programs, designations of landmark buildings and districts, design review and public improvements.
10. Conservation districts will be established to retain the character of older neighborhoods which do not qualify as historic districts but nevertheless contribute to the identity of Leesburg.
11. An advisory committee will be appointed to identify the important and distinguishing characteristics of potential conservation neighborhoods to serve as the basis for modification of ordinances and standards that encourage more appropriate development.

Urban Design Policies

The encouragement of creative urban design will be necessary to ensure that Leesburg continues to develop with the architectural variety and compatible mixture of uses that produces the town's unique identity. New residential development that perpetuates the diversity of Leesburg's traditional building pattern composed of distinct neighborhoods would be desirable. A collection of neighborhoods rather than a series of large-scale developments would avoid the dull homogeneity of mid-20th century suburban development, which often has no links with local identity and either dilutes or destroys the sense of place that is characteristic of older communities.

There is an opportunity to encourage desirable urban design and to achieve this goal, criteria should be established for commercial and residential planned developments.

1. The town will strive to maintain its visual variety and unique character by encouraging a mix of development types and architectural styles that are generally compatible with Leesburg's historic small town character in order to maintain its visual variety and unique character.
2. The town will encourage quality urban design through modification of zoning and subdivision regulations, including flexible design standards, incentives and bonuses.
3. The major entry ways into Leesburg will be identified, protected and enhanced in order to preserve

Historic Preservation and Urban Design Element

the natural setting and appearance of the community.

4. Infill development must be compatible with the character of the town.
5. A continuous town open space/trail network will serve as a unifying urban design feature for the community. The town shall support the development of a trail system incorporating stream valleys, natural drainage ways and adjacent steep slopes. Connections to community facilities should be sought.
6. New residential, commercial and industrial development and redevelopment will follow sound land use planning. The goal is to provide a livable building environment through the use of such elements as landscaping, building materials and human scale in order that new construction respect the established character of Leesburg.
7. The town will take a leadership role to ensure that new capital projects are positive additions to the community's heritage.
8. The town, utilities and public service companies will place all existing utility lines underground.
9. The town should encourage good landscape design and urban beautification in existing and new developments.
10. The town will provide ordinance options that produce development consistent with the present character of Leesburg.
11. The town and VDOT will cooperate to assure that engineering standards allow consistency between the existing town scale and the scale of future development.
12. Commercial zoning requirements will be developed to achieve compatibility between new development and the scale and site design of existing neighborhoods.
13. The town will provide development flexibility to promote quality urban design and efficient land use patterns consistent with town character.

Action Program

1. Develop a graphic checklist of the town's urban design standards for reference by the Town officials and developers.
2. Create a descriptive inventory of vacant or under-utilized parcels in the town's urbanized core area to encourage infill development.
3. Ensure that capital improvement projects are environmentally and conservationally sensitive.
4. Evaluate the use of incentive programs to encourage investment in historic preservation and identify funding sources and financial incentives for historic preservation.
5. Update and computerize the 1975 historic building survey and map of the Old and Historic District and undertake a survey of undocumented historic landmarks and archeological sites within Leesburg.
6. Incorporate waiver provisions into regulations written in the late 20th century to avoid alterations to the setting or scale of historic streetscapes or conservation neighborhoods.
7. Identify neighborhoods developed in the first half of the 20th century that contribute to the unique character of Leesburg for conservation.

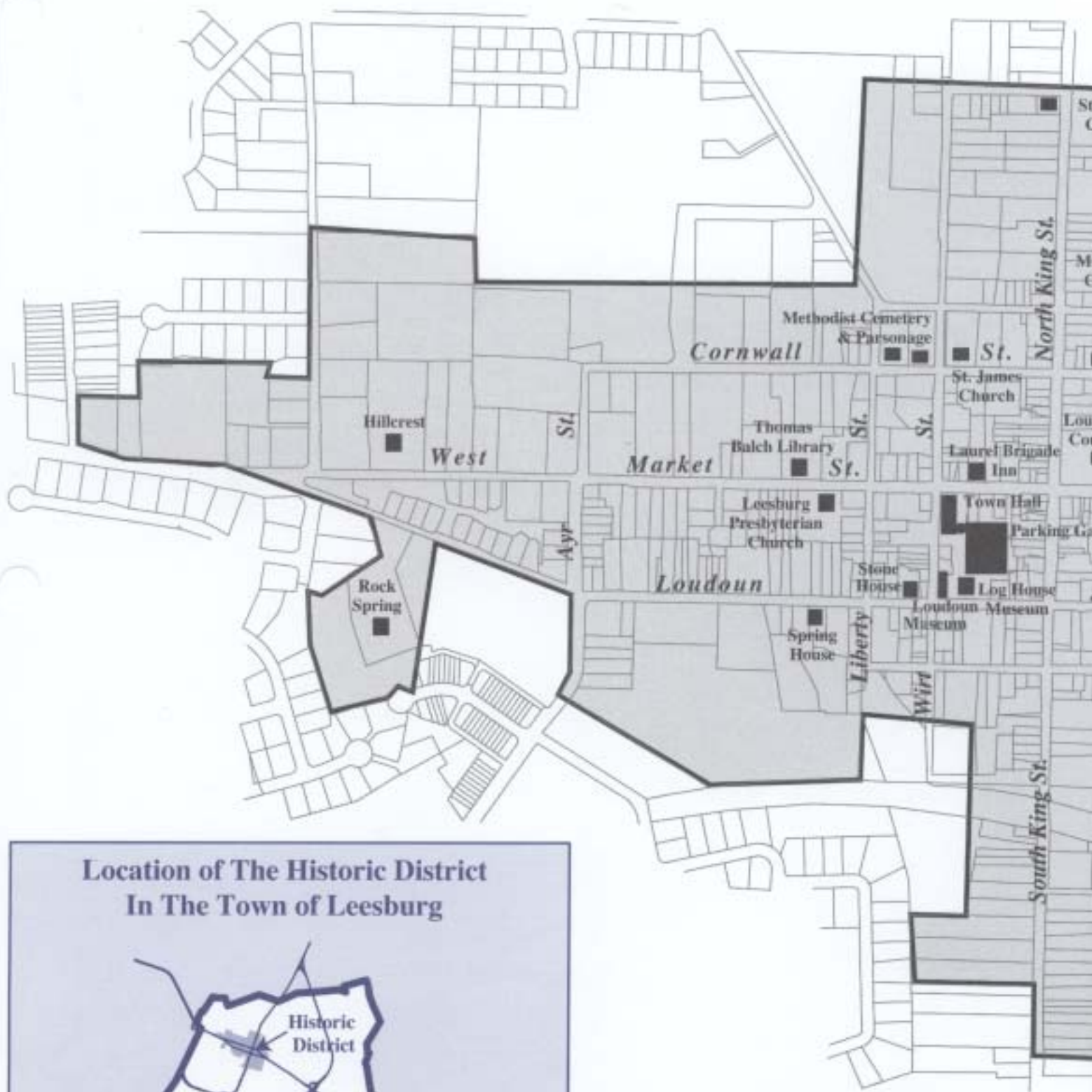
Historic Preservation and Urban Design Element

8. Evaluate alternative mechanisms for preserving the established characteristics of neighborhoods, such as state enabling legislation that allows the creation of Special Government Interest Overlay Districts to achieve a defined local purpose.
9. Establish a mechanism to protect historic and archeological sites outside of the Old and Historic District in a manner similar to that used to protect the Old and Historic District.

Annual Historic Preservation and Urban Design Element Review Criteria

In order to evaluate changing conditions in Leesburg's management of historic preservation and urban design, track annually:

- The historic and design characteristics of buildings through updating the Architectural and Historic Inventory Form, known as the Building Survey
- Use and condition of buildings in the Old and Historic District and other identified historic sites.
- Inventory of vacant and underutilized parcels.
- Status of implementation of Policies and Action Program

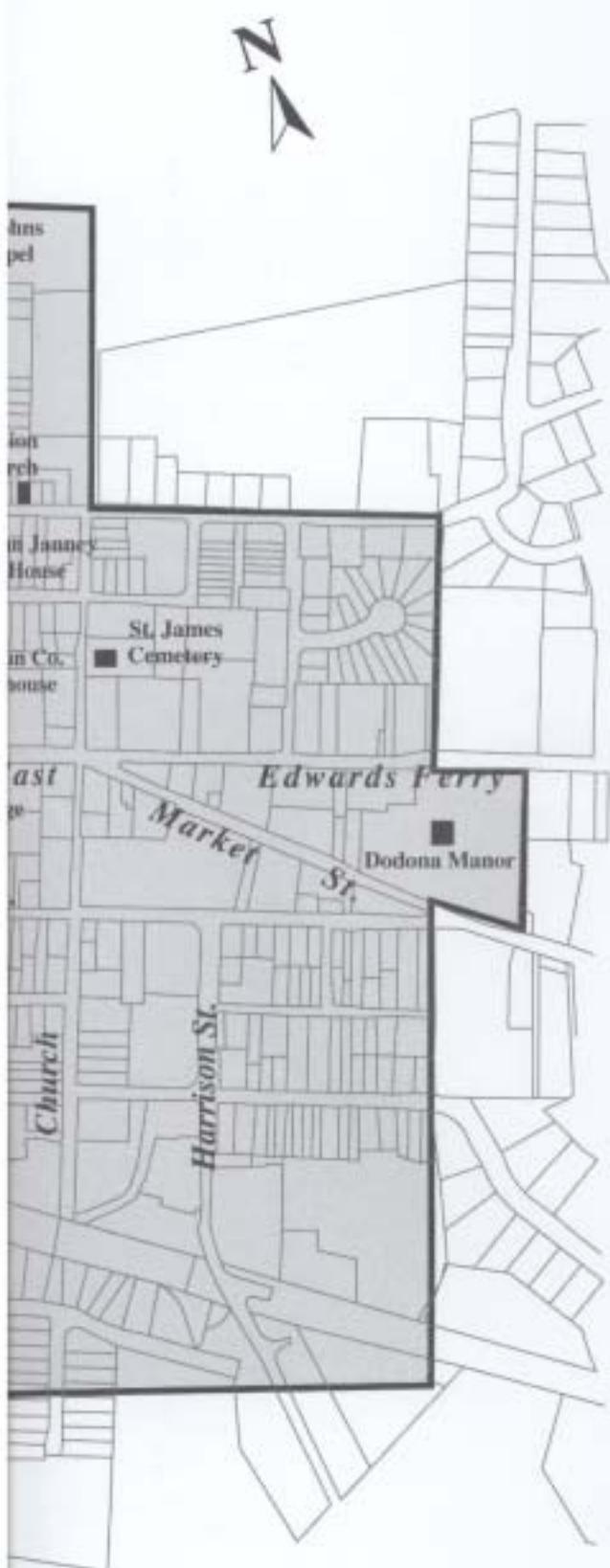


Location of The Historic District In The Town of Leesburg



The Town of Leesburg in Virginia

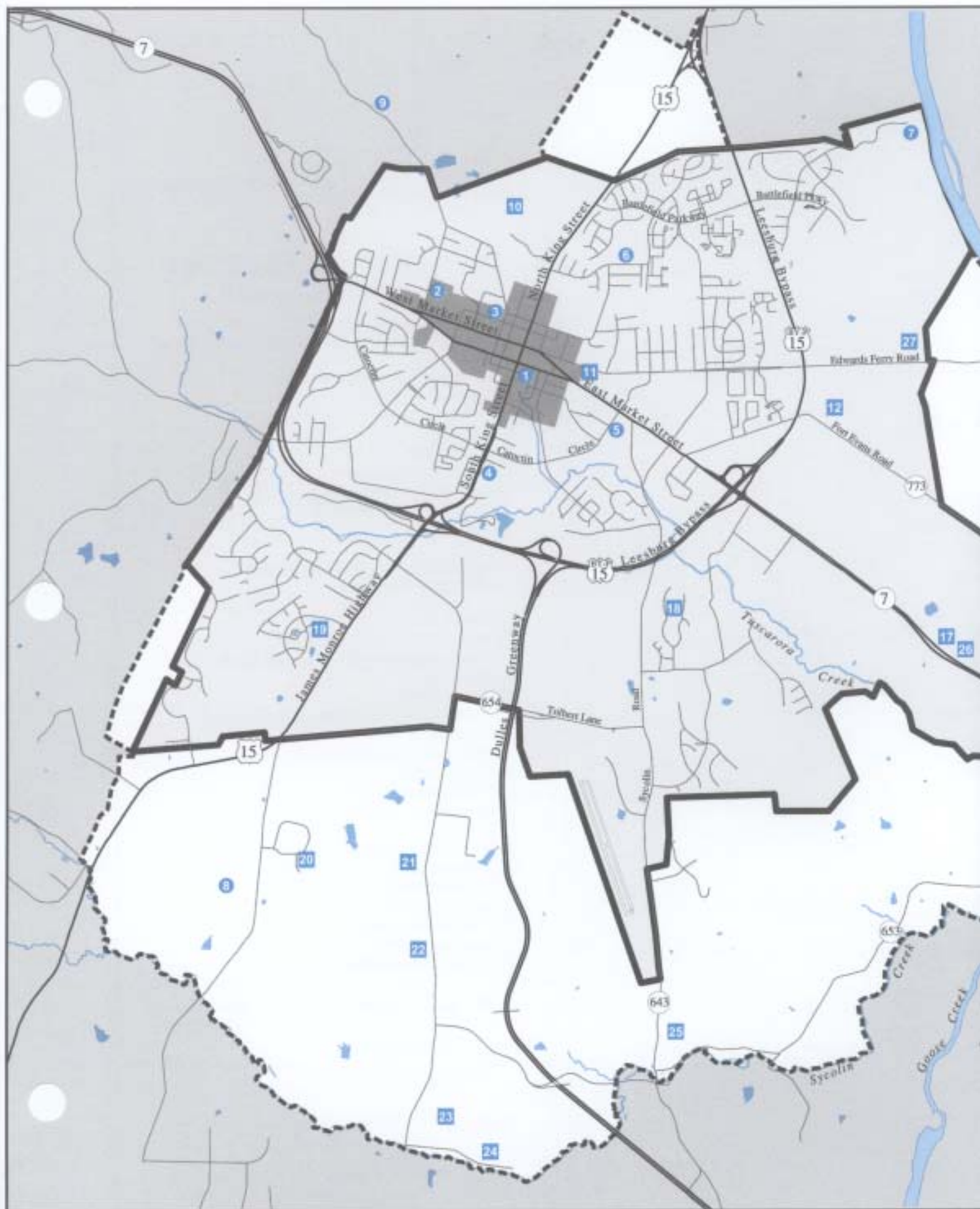
Old and Historic District Historic Resources in and Around The Leesburg Old and Historic District



— Historic District
Boundary

Scale: One Inch Equals Approximately 720 feet.

*This map should be interpreted only in conjunction
with the appropriate text of the 1997 Town Plan.*



The Town of Leesburg in Virginia

Historic Resources In and Around Leesburg

Listed on National Register of Historic Places:

- 1 Leesburg Old & Historic District
- 2 Hillcrest
- 3 Old Stone Church site and cemetery
- 4 Waverly
- 5 Douglass School
- 6 Carlheim (Paxton Home)
- 7 Ball's Bluff Battlefield and
National Cemetery
- 8 Rokeby

Surveyed by Virginia Department
of Historic Resources:

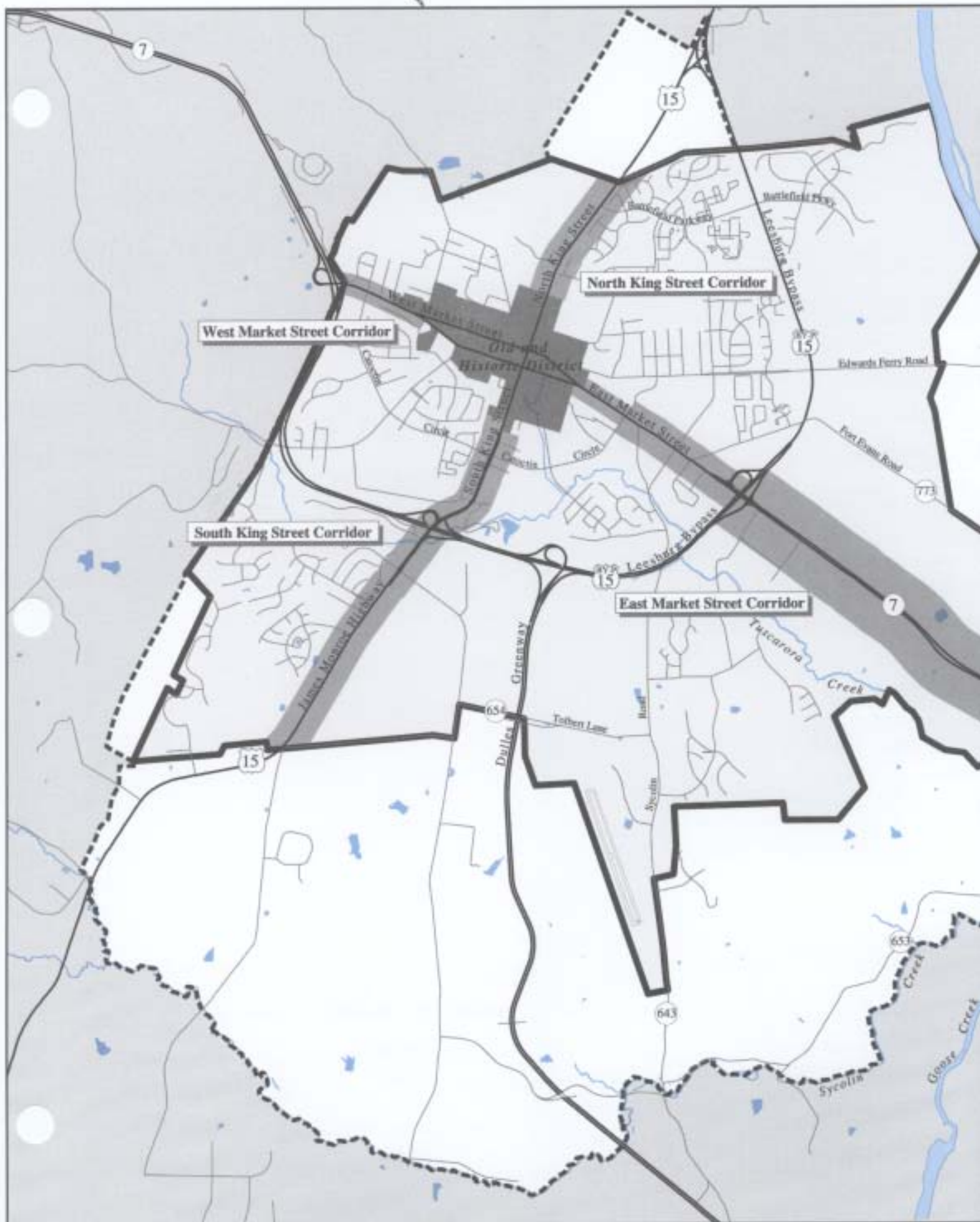
- 9 Morven Park
- 10 Ida Lee Park (Greenwood Farm)
- 11 Dodona Manor (George C. Marshall home)
- 12 Fort Evans
- 13 Cattail Ordinary
- 14 Red Rock Wilderness Overlook Regional Park
- 15 Eagle Mining Company
- 16 Goose Creek Truss Bridge
- 17 Carradoc Hall
- 18 Fort Beauregard
- 19 Greenway
- 20 Dun Robin
- 21 Robert Elgin Jr. House
- 22 Bridges Farm
- 23 Greenfield Farm
- 24 Log Tenant House
- 25 Union Baptist Church
- 26 Stone Harper House
- 27 Ball's Bluff Masked Battery

- | | |
|---|---|
|  Town Boundary |  Urban Growth Boundary |
|  Major Roads |  Secondary Roads |
|  Water | |

Scale: One Inch Equals Approximately 3,200 Feet

*This map should be interpreted only in conjunction
with the appropriate text of the 1997 Town Plan.*





The Town of Leesburg in Virginia

H-2 Corridor Overlay District



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|---------------|-----------------------|
| Town Boundary | Urban Growth Boundary |
| Major Roads | Secondary Roads |
| Water | H-2 District |

Scale: One Inch Equals Approximately 3,200 Feet

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